

### Sentence-Composing Tools: Clause Types

#### DEFINITION

Clauses are groups of words containing subjects and verbs. An independent clause can stand alone as a complete sentence. A dependent clause cannot stand alone because it is only a sentence part, not a complete sentence. Dependent clauses must be linked to independent clauses for their full meaning.

All sentences have at least one independent clause—frequently more—and many sentences also have dependent clauses.

There are three kinds of dependent clauses, taught later in this worktext: adjective clause (page 84), adverb clause (page 90), and noun clause (page 96). Both adjective clauses and adverb clauses are *outside* the independent clause to which they link; noun clauses are *inside* the independent clause to which they link.

**Examples:** Independent clauses are underlined, and dependent clauses are set in boldface.

1. When flour was scarce, the boy's mother would wrap the leftover biscuits in a clean flour sack and put them away for the next meal. (The dependent clause—an adverb clause—is outside the independent clause.)

William H. Armstrong, *Souder*

2. He pictured his father, who must have been a shy and quiet boy, because he was a shy and quiet man, seated with his group waiting to be called to the stage. (The dependent clauses—an adjective clause and an adverb clause—are outside the independent clause.)

Lois Lowry, *The Giver*

3. Wilbur was what farmers call a spring pig. (The dependent clause—a noun clause—is inside the independent clause.)

E. B. White, *Charlotte's Web*

#### Sentences with Only Independent Clauses:

1. About five o'clock the next morning the storm slammed into us with all its blizzardous fury. (Contains one independent clause.)

Bill and Vera Cleaver, *Where the Lilies Bloom*

## Using the Sentence-Composing Toolbox

2. A frilly lace cap covered the woman's graying hair, and a long plain dress reached down to her ankles. (Contains two independent clauses joined by and.)

Larry Weinberg, *Ghost Hotel*

3. A little corn was raised on the sterile slope, and it grew short and thick under the wind, and all the cobs formed on the landward sides of the stalks. (Contains three independent clauses joined by and.)

John Steinbeck, "Flight"

### Sentences with Independent Clauses and Dependent Clauses:

4. Catherine had loaded her oilcloth satchel with the leftovers from Sunday dinner, and we were enjoying a breakfast of cake and chicken when gunfire slapped through the woods. (Dependent clause is outside the independent clause.)

Truman Capote, *The Grass Harp*

5. No one spoke at supper, and his mother, who sat next to him, leaned her head in her hand all through the meal, curving her fingers over her eyes so as not to see him. (Dependent clause is outside the independent clause.)

Gina Berriault, "The Stone Boy"

6. I thought of how quickly dry timber becomes a roaring fire from a single spark. (Dependent clause is inside the independent clause.)

Eugenia Collier, "Sweet Potato Pie"

7. Until I turned twelve years old, the kind of friends I had were what you'd expect. (The first dependent clause is outside the independent clause; the second is inside the independent clause.)

Joseph Krumboltz, *Onion John*

### PRACTICE 1: MATCHING

Match the dependent clauses with the sentences. Write out each sentence, inserting the dependent clauses at the caret (^) and underlining them.

#### Sentences:

1. A jury never looks at a defendant it has convicted, and ^, not one of them looked at Tom Robinson.

Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

#### Dependent Clauses:

- a. what I really couldn't imagine

## Using the Sentence-Composing Toolbox

2. Ferdinand didn't look at ^, and instead of sitting on the nice, cool grass in the shade, he sat on a bumble bee.

Munro Leaf, *The Story of Ferdinand*

- b. which had once been solid and strong

3. His large face was fixed in a permanent expression of misery and despair, and his body, ^, had shrunk to the dimensions of a starving person.

Paul Read Piers, *Alive*

- c. who came and prowled the nearby darkness, growling but fire-wary

4. ^ was Miss Love kissing him, much less marrying him.

Olive Ann Burns, *Cold Sassy Tree*

- d. where he was sitting

5. That night he kept a fire going and sat watching for the lion, ^.

Hal Borland, *When the Legends Die*

- e. when this jury came in

### PRACTICE 2: UNSCRAMBLING TO IMITATE

In the model and the scrambled list, identify the independent and dependent clauses. Next, unscramble and write out the sentence parts to imitate the model. Finally, write your own imitation of the model and identify the independent and dependent clauses.

MODEL: As Harry passed the window, he saw her deep in determined conversation with her friend Marietta, who was wearing a very thick layer of makeup, which did not entirely obscure the odd formation of pimples still etched across her face.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

- a. which was not quite keeping the frisky puppy
- b. she noticed Mike caught in playful animation with their dog Skip
- c. who was chewing a green toy bone of rubber
- d. when Tiffany peeked into the room
- e. with boundless energy always entertained by such an artificial treat

## Using the Sentence-Composing Toolbox

### PRACTICE 3: COMBINING TO IMITATE

In the model, identify the independent and dependent clauses. Next, combine the list of sentences to imitate the model. Finally, write your own imitation of the model and identify the independent and dependent clauses.

MODEL: The strange creature, which was still steaming and shaking itself, opened its mouth and began to make noises.

C. S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet*

- a. This sentence is about the lost child.
- b. It was the child who was loudly crying and holding himself.
- c. The child turned his head.
- d. And the child started to see his parents.

### PRACTICE 4: IMITATING

Identify the independent and dependent clauses in the models and sample imitations. Then choose one of the models and write an imitation of the entire sentence, one sentence part at a time. See if your classmates can guess your model.

#### Models:

1. The balmy summer air, the restful quiet, the odor of the flowers, and the drowsing murmur of the bees made Aunt Polly nod off over her knitting, for she had no company but the cat, and it was asleep in her lap. (*Hint: The first of the three independent clauses has four subjects and one verb.*)

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Sample: The droning air conditioner, the quiet house, the lateness of the hour, and the pleasant sunset from his window made Grandfather remember other similar evenings, for he had no other entertainment but his memories, and they were movies in his mind.

2. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, Mr. Jones lurched across the yard, kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was already snoring. (*Hint: The independent clause has one subject with four verbs.*)

George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

## Using the Sentence-Composing Toolbox

**Sample:** With the sound of cheering from his friends playing in his mind, Tom ran across the field, picked up the Frisbee in the ditch, gave himself an emphatic pat of congratulations on his back, and marched back across to the field, where the girls were loudly applauding.

3. When darkness had fallen over everything, and as the stars burned bright above them in the moonless sky, the children fell asleep. (*Hint: There are two dependent clauses.*)

Cynthia Voigt, *Homecoming*

**Sample:** As order settled into the classroom, and while the students remained seated near them in the seventh-grade room, the administrators sat down.

### PRACTICE 5: EXPANDING

Below are sentences with the clauses omitted at the caret mark (^). For each caret, add the indicated kind of clause (independent or dependent), blending your content and style with the rest of the sentence.

1. Because we sang every day and Mr. Rice was a gifted music teacher, ^. (*Add an independent clause.*)

Katherine Paterson, *Jacob Have I Loved*

*Note:* It's okay to begin a sentence with *because* if you have an independent clause after it. This sentence has a dependent clause beginning with "because," and you're adding an independent clause, so everything's fine.

2. Frodo, hardly less terrified than his companions, was shivering, ^, but his terror was swallowed up in a sudden temptation to put on the Ring. (*Add a dependent clause.*)

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

3. Driven by despair, ^, Taran groped for a handful of stones, of loose earth, even a broken twig to fling in defiance at the warrior, ^, blade upraised. (*Add two dependent clauses.*)

Lloyd Alexander, *The High King*